

August 27, 2013

Testimony Before the Michigan House & Senate Joint Judiciary Committee on Juvenile
Sentencing in Michigan Following Miller vs. Alabama

Good morning to you all and thank you for giving me this opportunity to share my story and my opinion on the new proposed Michigan Legislation. My name is Sarah Samborski. I am speaking to you all today on behalf of my husband Public Safety Officer Mason James Samborski who was killed in the line-of-duty on December 28, 2008 by a 16 1/2 year-old teen. He was taken from us way too soon leaving behind, at age 28, many close family and friends including myself his wife and our 13 month-old daughter Madeline.

My worst nightmare began the moment I received that knock on the door at 2:45 AM on December 28, 2008. There were two Oak Park officers and a Livingston county officer standing on my doorstep. It was that moment that you have heard about or seen in movies that you dread but never really thought it would happen to you. The officers told me that Mason had been shot and they were there escort me to the hospital. I asked if he was ok and if he was alive but they wouldn't reveal anything more. We picked up Mason's parents Ken and Joan and Mason's brother Kurt on the way to the hospital. It was within that next hour that we learned that Mason was shot in the head. They had tried everything they could to save him but there was nothing else they could do. I will never forget walking down the hallway seeing so many officers lined up against the walls on the way to his room. I saw Mason lying on the bed and didn't want to leave him. I held his hand and kissed him and just stayed with him as long as they let me. Although he was shot in the head he looked like my Mason: my husband, my best friend, and the father to our daughter. Someone gave me his wedding ring and his wallet that he had on him when he was killed. I immediately put Mason's ring on under my own wedding ring so I could feel closer to him. I called my mom and dad from the hospital and said the words out loud to my mom on the phone for the first time, "Mason is dead." I couldn't stop crying as I said those words. Madeline just happened to be spending the night at their house and was awoken by the call and was crying hysterically. My aunt came over so to watch her so they could come up to hospital. Mason's sister Natalie, who was 9 months pregnant with her first child, and her husband Jeremy had to be told over the phone that their brother was dead. They left for the hospital as soon as they could. My sister Anna and her husband Andy and my sister Becky and her husband Jamie were also told over the phone and all came up to hospital. Everyone was in shock and in pain. No one could believe that this was real.

Our daughter Madeline didn't get to say goodbye to her daddy. In fact, when he was first killed, she would run around the house looking for him and calling out "Daddy, where are you?"

victims or the victims' families. These are the people who have suffered. These are the people dealing with a tragic loss greater than anything these teenagers convicted for these crimes will ever have to deal with. These teenagers chose to commit their acts. I say chose because that is what these teenagers did. They premeditated their crimes. They acted in a way in which allowed a jury to believe them guilty of 1st degree murder. They deserve the strictest sentences allowable by law. And the Senate bills go further to ensure this happens.

I believe that the legislation being considered in the Senate would allow the victims' families to have a little more peace of mind. It would allow the victims' families that have been dealing with their grief and pain to try and move forward and find their way without their loved one by their side. Shorter sentences with fewer years between parole eligibility like the legislation proposed in the House just make the victims families constantly relive their loved ones murder. We have all been through enough. Please think about the real victims and their families. Honor them by making the right sentencing choice for their murderers. I am here today to give my support for the Senate bills and I hope you will too.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah E. Samborski". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Sarah E. Samborski

Widow of Mason J. Samborski

1297 Edgebrook Dr.

Howell, MI 48843

Livingston County